

LESSON 1: THE ARMOR OF GOD: BELT OF TRUTH

 Ephesians 6:10-12, 14; Acts 5:17-42



MUSIC VIDEO

[10 min]

I Will Not Be Afraid

Supplies

- “I Will Not Be Afraid” (watch or download [here](#))
- “Stand Strong” (watch or download [here](#))
- “There’s Power in the Blood” (watch or download [here](#))

Sing Songs to God

Sing the three songs in any order.



TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

[10 min]

Truth and Lion

Supplies

- “Truth and Lion” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))
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Discuss and Watch “Truth and Lion”

Say: **We’re learning that we fight evil with the truth. But what happens when people don’t believe us? Let’s see what happened when one boy’s friends didn’t believe him.**

Watch “Truth and Lion.”

Ask: • **Be honest: Did *you* believe Cade really had a lion? Why or why not?**

• **Tell about a time you shared the truth about Jesus but people didn’t believe you.**

• **What is it about Jesus’ story that might seem hard to believe?**

Say: **There will always be people who don’t believe the truth about Jesus.**

But we can keep on wearing our belts of truth and telling people the truth. We fight evil with truth.



Supplies

- Bible

Easy Prep

- Brief your adult or teen helpers on their roles for the Spread a Message section.

Set It Up

Say: **Today we're starting a series about the armor of God. The armor of God talks about a soldier's armor as an example of the kinds of things we need to do to stand strong for God.**

So what's the battle we're in? Listen to this.

Read Ephesians 6:10-12.

Ask: • **How do you feel when you hear that we're fighting against unseen, evil rulers?**

Say: **Knowing you're in a battle against evil spirits can sound scary. But here's something awesome: Jesus has already won the battle! And he gives us armor and weapons to join him on the winning side.**

The verses we read tell us to stand firm. The devil is also called Satan, and God can help us stand against him. Let's look at a time a guy named Peter stood firm when Satan wanted to keep the news of Jesus from spreading.

First, let's read about the piece of armor Peter used.

Read Ephesians 6:14.

Spread a Message

Say: **Here's a message I want you to spread: Pizza is delicious. Walk around the room and tell everyone you can! Tell people more than once!**

As kids begin to walk around and spread the message, your adult or teen helpers will go to kids individually to tell them they shouldn't be talking about pizza in church and to go stand in the corner as a punishment.

When several kids are standing in the corner, stop the activity.

Ask kids who are standing in the corner: • **How did you feel when you got in trouble for talking about pizza?**

Ask kids who are still playing: • **How did it affect *your* message when you saw others getting in trouble?**

Say: **This same kind of thing happened to the first Christians in the Bible. But they weren't talking about pizza; they were talking about *Jesus*! Some religious leaders known as the Pharisees and the Sadducees didn't like that. See, they loved God, but they didn't know Jesus really *was* God. They thought Jesus had lied about that.**

But Peter's battle wasn't against them; Peter's battle was against Satan, who was tricking the religious leaders into trying to stop the message of Jesus from spreading. The Pharisees and Sadducees sent Peter and his friends (who were called apostles) to jail for talking about Jesus, just like some of you got in trouble for talking about pizza. But check this out!

Read Acts 5:17-20. As you do, head over to the corner where the kids who got in trouble are standing, and gesture for them to leave the corner.

Say: **Even though Peter and his friends had just been sent to jail for talking about Jesus, they did what the angel said. They left the jail and talked about Jesus more! They knew we fight evil with truth. In a way, they put on their belts of truth to talk about Jesus—even when Satan wanted to stop them.**

Let's spread a message about Jesus now.

Have kids walk around again for a minute or two, this time sharing the message "Jesus loves you," while your adult or teen helpers stand in the corner looking confused.

Then say: **So imagine the religious leaders' surprise when they went to the jail and no one was there! Then they found out where Peter and his friends were.**

Have a Trial

Read Acts 5:22-25.

Ask: • **If you were Peter or one of his friends, what would you do when the leaders came to the Temple to look for you?**

Say: **The leaders came and arrested Peter and his friends *again*. Let's imagine we're at their trial.**

Have a few kids be Peter and his friends and stand on one side of the room while your adult or teen helpers stand on the other side. You can stand in the middle to be the judge. All the other kids are the jurors.

Say: **Peter and his friends knew we fight evil with truth, and they told some important truths.**

Have one of the kids in the Peter and friends group read Acts 5:29-32.

Ask: • **What do you think, jury? Are they guilty of talking about Jesus?**
• **How should we punish them?**

Say: **The religious leaders wanted to kill Peter and his friends so they couldn't talk about Jesus anymore. But then one leader named Gamaliel (guh-MAY-lee-el) made a really good point.**

Have a child from the jury play the role of Gamaliel and read Acts 5:38-39.

Ask: • **What do you think, jury? What should we do?** You can also get input from the kids playing Peter and his friends, and your adult or teen helpers can chime in as well, in character.

Say: **The religious leaders realized Gamaliel's advice was good, and they didn't kill Peter and his friends. But they *did* flog them. That means they hit them over and over with a stick or a whip. That's still a really bad punishment. Let's see what their reaction was.**

Have one of the kids in the Peter and friends group read Acts 5:41.

Ask: • **Why do you think the apostles would rejoice about being flogged?**

Say: **Being flogged could've felt like losing the battle, but not to the apostles! They knew we fight evil with truth, and no one could stop them from telling the truth about Jesus.**

Read Acts 5:42. Have kids walk around and proclaim to one another, "Jesus is the Messiah."

Say: **Just like Peter and his friends, we fight evil with truth. We know when we tell others the amazing truth about Jesus, nothing can beat us!**



Is It Really a Good Thing to Be Bullied for Telling the Truth About Jesus?

Supplies

- Bibles
- paper
- pens

Set It Up

Say: In today's Bible story, Jesus' friends had a really unusual reaction to being flogged. Let's read that part again.

Read Acts 5:40-41.

Ask: • What do you think about the apostles *rejoicing* because they got to suffer for Jesus?

Say: Being flogged, or whipped, seems like a weird thing to celebrate. I don't think most people rejoice when they get bullied, whether it's physically or with words. So is it really a *good* thing to be bullied for telling the truth about Jesus? Let's dig in to that.

Dig Deeper

Say: Let's see what the Bible has to say about persecution—which is a bigger word that means being teased for being a Christian.

Read 1 Peter 4:14-16.

Say: Interesting—these verses show the same attitude Jesus' friends had! It even says being called by Jesus' name is a privilege. You're called by Jesus' name any time someone calls you a Christian...*even* if they say it in a mean or teasing way! Let me show you what I mean.

Have kids share mean things people have said to them because they believe in Jesus. For example, "Christians are stupid," "Christians are weird," or "Christians don't have any fun."

Ask: • Do those words feel more like a compliment or an insult? Explain.

Say: When people make fun of us for being Christians, they may say insulting words like the ones we just shared. But here's what they're *really* saying, according to the verses we read:

- You bear the name of Christ!
- The glorious Spirit of God rests on you!

Ask: • **When you hear it that way, does it sound like an insult or a compliment?**

Say: **When people make fun of you for being a Christian, you can turn that insult upside down. Why? Because it's really a compliment—they just don't know it! So instead of hearing what they say the way they mean it, hear the truth—you're acting just like Jesus! What a compliment! And that's not all; listen to why these verses says we can be glad about being persecuted.**

Read Matthew 5:11-12.

Ask: • **How do these verses make you feel about being persecuted?**

Say: **When we're bullied or teased for believing the truth about Jesus, a great reward awaits us in heaven. That's exciting! Now, if you're being *physically* hurt, you should tell a trusted adult about that. But if you get made fun of a lot for being a Christian, you can learn to take it as a compliment and look forward to your great reward!**

Turn It Around

Give each child a piece of paper and a pen.

Say: **When we're insulted for being Christians, that can make us feel sad. Draw a frown on your paper.** Draw a simple frown without eyes.

Say: **When the early Christians were being persecuted, they had a secret symbol they used to remind each other they weren't alone. It was a fish. We can use the same symbol for encouragement when we're persecuted.**

Since being insulted for following Jesus is actually a compliment, draw a smile under your frown. It should connect at one end and then overlap at the other end to make a fish shape. Draw this for kids before they do it.



Say: **Let's try drawing more fish symbols. We'll draw them in a special way.**

Have kids form groups of at least two, ideally with people they sometimes see outside of church. For example, you may have kids who go to the same school, are neighbors, or participate together in a community class. In their groups, have kids take turns repeating insults they've heard other people say about Christians. For each one, kids will draw a frown, then someone else will add the smile to make a fish.

Say: **It's okay to feel sad for being made fun of. But next time you feel sad because someone teases you for loving Jesus, draw this symbol as a reminder to turn your frown into a smile because you just got the best compliment ever! In fact, you can use this symbol when you see other people from our class!**

Ask: • **Where do you see people from our class outside of church?**

• **How could you draw the symbol there?** Encourage kids to think of ideas using things other than paper and pens that would be relevant to each place. For example, kids could draw in the sand at recess or in the air as they pass someone in the hallway at school.

Say: **When you're having a hard time being insulted, talk to another Christian, because you're not in this alone. In fact, Jesus went through rejection, too. And this is what he said about *our* rejection for being his followers.**

Read Luke 10:16.

Ask: • **How do you feel about what Jesus said?**

Say: **We're in a battle against evil. There are people out there who want to fight against the truth! But we fight evil with truth when we wear our belts of truth and keep on spreading the truth—no matter how much other people think they're insulting us.**



OBJECT LESSON

[10 min]

No Way!

Supplies

- 16-inch piece of yarn
- 16-ounce cups (1 per child, plus 1 for you)
- 10 sticky-note pads

Tips

- You can use things such as decks of cards or toy blocks instead of sticky-note pads. Anything that's flat and stackable that the cup can sit on will work.
- If you use different supplies, make sure when you stack the cup on top of the supplies and measure the height of the stack that it stays under 11¼ inches.

Watch a Surprising Truth Revealed

Say: **We've been exploring truth today and how we fight evil with truth. The truth can be surprising and really grab our attention. I'll show you what I mean.**

- Give everyone a cup, and invite kids to decide if they think the measurement around the mouth of the cup is greater than the height of the cup. Allow a few minutes for kids to examine the cups and make their guesses.
- Invite kids to vote by a show of hands on which measurement is greater.
- Where everyone can see, place your cup on top of one sticky-note pad. Have the kids vote again now that the cup is a little taller.
- Continue adding sticky-note pads under the cup and allowing kids to vote on which measurement is greater.
- As the stack grows, it becomes harder and harder to believe that the measurement around the mouth of the cup is greater than the height measurement. Most of the kids will vote that the height is now greater.
- After the last sticky-note pad is added, use the piece of yarn to measure around the mouth of the cup, and hold that length on the yarn. Then hold one end of the measured yarn at the base of the stack and pull the other end up to show that the yarn still passes the top of the cup—the measurement of the mouth of the cup is still greater than the height measurement!



Talk About It

Ask: • **What surprised you about the cup's measurements?**

Say: **Seeing a surprising truth revealed grabs our attention and helps that truth stick in our memories. We remember experiences that make us say "Wow!" or "No way!"**

Ask: • **What are some truths about God that surprise you?** Share an example of your own, such as how no matter what you do or how badly you feel you've messed up, God loves you.

Say: **The truth about God can be surprising and exciting, and as we wear our belts of truth we can share that surprise and excitement. When we help others see the truth about God, we fight evil with truth.**



CRAFT

Truth Catcher

[20 min]

Supplies

- “Truth Catcher” handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- markers
- pens

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Truth Catchers

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a “Truth Catcher” handout. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make Truth Catchers. (Note: Some of the kids in your class may already know how to make a “cootie catcher.” If so, let them coach others on how to fold this craft.)

- Cut out the larger square.
- Fold the corners along the dotted lines toward the center of the blank side of the square.
- With the printed side up, fold the corners in toward the center dot.
- Then fold the squares in half one way, undo that fold, and fold them in half the other way.
- When kids undo that fold, they should be able to hold their Truth Catchers by inserting their thumbs and fingers into the outer flaps as shown in the following photo.



Decorate

- Have kids draw a belt on each of the four outer flaps of their Truth Catchers, using a different color for each belt.

- On the eight inner triangles, kids can write the names of places where they need to remember the truths that are hidden under the triangles. For example, if they feel lonely at school, they might write “school” on the triangle that covers “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.” Other places could include home, sports practice, church, the car, at a friend’s house, and so on. It’s okay for kids to repeat the same place if more than one verse is relevant there.
- Under each place, kids will write any number from 1 to 8.

Play

- To use their Truth Catchers, kids will hold them so they can see the four outer flaps.
- They’ll choose a belt shown on one of the flaps, then open the Truth Catcher one way and then the other for each letter in the name of the belt’s color. For example, they would open the Truth Catcher three times for the color red.
- Then they’ll choose a number from one of the inner triangles that’s showing and open the Truth Catcher that many times, repeating for a total of three turns and then choosing a place that’s showing. Then they can open the panel with the place they chose and read the truth underneath.
- Let kids play as much as time allows.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How did you decide on the places you need to hear each truth?**

• **Lift up one flap at random. What evil or lie can that truth help you fight?**

Say: **Our evil enemy surrounds us with lies: lies about God, lies about our faith, and lies about ourselves. But we fight evil with truth. When you need to fight a lie, put on your belt, take out your Truth Catcher, and fight!**

Have kids take their Truth Catchers home and use them to share truths with their families and friends and to remind themselves of truths when they need to fight lies.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Puzzle Race

Supplies

- puzzles with approximately 25 pieces (1 for every 3-4 kids)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Race to Put a Puzzle Together

Let's have a puzzle race! You'll work with a team to relay puzzle pieces and put them together at the other side of the room. The first team to finish its puzzle wins!

- Form group of three or four kids, and have groups spread out across one side of your playing area.
- Give each group a puzzle in its box. Have kids open the box and place it on the floor near them.
- Set up tables or hard surfaces directly across the room from each group.
- On "go," team members will take turns grabbing a puzzle piece from the box and running across the room to place it on their team's table, then running back to high-five the next team member who'll run another piece to the table, and so on.
- As pieces collect at the other side of the room, team members can assemble the puzzle; however, they can't stand by their table for more than 10 seconds. Have an adult or teen helper keep watch at the tables to let kids know when time is up.
- The first team to assemble its puzzle wins.
- Play again as time allows, switching so teams assemble a different puzzle.

Talk About It

- **How is putting together the puzzles in our game like figuring out what's true about God?**
- **What are some truths about God that you've learned over time?**
We fight evil with truth. Sometimes the truth isn't always clear right away. We could spend eternity learning new truths about God, because he's so big. The more truth we know, the stronger our belts get and the better we can fight evil with truth.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Human Guess Who

Tip

- If you have a smaller class, play in pairs, and each person can choose anyone in the room as “It” while his or her partner guesses.

Recommended for six or more children.

Play a Life-Size Game of “Guess Who?”

Say: **Let’s play a game where the truth will be revealed.**

- Form two teams, and have teams move to opposite sides of the room.
- Have teams huddle up and discreetly choose one person to be “It,” then stand in two or three lines facing the other team (as if they’re a “Guess Who?” board).
- Teams will ask questions back and forth in order to guess who is It on the other team. Kids must take turns and ask yes-or-no questions like “Is your person wearing green?” or “Is your person wearing glasses?” If the answer is “no,” kids who fit those descriptions must sit down where they are, eliminating possibilities. (It may help to designate one person from each team to be the “Answerer” who responds to the other team’s questions.)
- Play until one team correctly guesses who’s It on the other team.
- Play again as time allows.

Talk About It

Ask: • **In this game, how did questions help you discover the truth about who was It?**

• **How does asking questions help us discern or figure out the truth about God?**

Say: **As we fight evil with truth, questions are good things! They help us think deeply so we really understand the truth of who God is and what he’s done for us. Questions can help us learn more truth and strengthen our belts of truth.**
